

MAGIC MUSEUM AWARDED HUMANITIES COUNCIL GRANT



The American Museum of Magic is pleased to announce its selection as a grant recipient by the Michigan Humanities

Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The \$15,000 grant will be used to develop the museum's Magic in Michigan initiative which will gather and make available compelling stories of magicians with a strong link to the state of Michigan. "This award will really make exciting things happen" said Jeff Taylor, the museum's Director. "We are extremely enthusiastic about the award and are already moving on launching the initiative."

"The project has four major goals" said Taylor. "The first is to look through the museum's vast archival holdings and find already existing materials that relate to magic and magicians in Michigan. The second is to examine what role Michigan played in the lives and work of some of the country's best known magicians. The third, and one of the most important goals, is to record oral histories with important living magicians and those involved in the world of Michigan magic. Finally, these materials will create a major addition to the museum's website where it will be accessible to magic fans around the world."

The grant is funded through the Michigan Humanities Council's Major Gift Program, "Michigan People, Michigan Places; Our Stores, Our Lives". AMM was one of only 14 projects to receive funding. As Taylor observed, "This initiative is of vast importance as it allows us to showcase many of the museum's existing treasures and helps add to the historical record. The stories to be told will feature

well known names as well as the names of those less well known magicians whose stories will be of particular interest."

Reviewers of AMM's grant application recognized the inclusion of oral histories in the project as an important opportunity to capture. Reviewers also felt that the project's reach "beyond the standard of magicians was very important so that non-magicians and area visitors may also learn about magic's impact on the history and culture of the south central Michigan area".

The project will develop over the course of the next year. The resulting new exhibit will be posted in the fall of 2012. Special programs will also be held at that time to further share findings.

The American Museum of Magic Museum has recently transitioned from a private collection to a non-profit public museum with the passing of its founders, Bob and Elaine Lund, in 1995 and 2006, respectively. A thirteen member Board of Trustees, drawn from around the region and carefully recruited from a variety of professional backgrounds, has charted a new course for the museum that will guide its development into a prominent institution that preserves the memories and traditions of both small town and world-renowned performers, highlighting their contributions to popular culture. An impressive collection of artifacts, illusions, documents, books and memorabilia interprets four centuries of magic and magicians from throughout the world. It is the largest museum of its kind open to the public in the United States, and has been referred to as the "Smithsonian of American Magic."

The American Museum of Magic is open from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM Tuesday through Saturday in June,

July and August, and Thursday through Saturday during the months of April, May, September and October. Between November 26 and December 18, the museum will be open Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays from Noon to 4 p.m. (Adults \$5/Children \$3.50). Tours by appointment can be scheduled by calling (269) 781-7570.

The mission of the American Museum of Magic is to inspire and delight the public with the wonder of magic, as well as to document and celebrate the contributions and resilience of the magician.

Information on the Michigan Humanities Council can be found at www.michiganhumanties.org.